

History 275: The Queer 20th Century
Professor Finn Enke
Fall 2023: Queer 20th Century through Art and Activism
Tuesdays 1:20-3:15, Education 345
Office Hrs: Tues 3:15-3:45; Weds 11:00-12:00, by appointment
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Course Description

This FIG Seminar introduces Queer US History 20th century with a focus on the arts and activism broadly conceived—that is, the arts of being BIPOC2S and white LGBTQIA+ people. We have been making history and art since time immemorial, but how do we tell our own stories, survive, and thrive in the face of homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, ableism, class hierarchy, and other marginalizing forces? We will delve into the ways queer people have created communities, social movements, archives, as well as things more commonly associated with “art” including visual culture, literature, music, film. In the process, we will gain a better appreciation for the ways LGBTQIA+ people have played significant roles in U.S. life.

Learning Outcomes

An historian's work includes gaining an understanding of and appreciation for the contexts and perspectives of people in the past. We will be paying attention to how people built LGBTQIA+ communities and expressed themselves out in joy and in struggle, for self-representation and also to confront sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia and other overt oppressions. Assignments and discussions are designed to help you:

- *develop confidence in your own interests, your ability to frame historical questions and your ability to pursue them.
- *find, interpret and analyze primary and secondary sources relevant to the queer 20th C.
- *gain greater awareness of historical contexts, social institutions, and social movements.
- *understand the relationships among community-building, art, and social structures.
- *develop facility with contextually appropriate vocabularies.
- *practice creative synthesis and original expression of insights.
- *learn collaborative process, listening for and valuing questions and differing perspectives.

Accessibility

Everyone is welcome in this seminar. I am happy do what I can do to make accommodations and adjustments, respect your learning needs and support your educational goals.

The McBurney Center provides useful documentation and support but I do not require documentation. Let me know how I can support your learning.

NOTE: This seminar does NOT use Canvas. This syllabus contains our schedule and all requirements. Keep it handy and consult it regularly. Submit assignments in hard copy, in person, during seminar. Handwriting and other mark-making encouraged.

Required Books: These will be provided to you to use for the semester:

The Stonewall Reader, New York Public Library
We Are Everywhere, Riemer and Brown

Other required sources provided electronically or on Reserve at College Library, as noted.

Course Requirements and Assignments All components add up to 100 pts.
All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade.

Attendance expectations: Please come to seminar on time and ready to discuss the day's materials. If you know ahead of time that you will miss any or all of a seminar, let me know prior to that week. If you miss class for any reason, contact me as soon as possible so we can help you stay involved. Please do NOT come if you are not feeling well.

1. Seminar Attendance, Discussion and Participation, 10 points:

This seminar is an opportunity to engage with and learn from one another in a small group context that encourages and benefits from everyone's contributions. An integral expectation of this seminar is to deepen our understanding through discussion engagement, listening, and community facilitation. We are each uniquely "wired" and bring unique experience to the seminar; supporting and appreciating each person's presence gives us the best possible chance to build insight together.

Collaborative co-facilitation:

Every person comes here with immeasurable insight. Everyone's perspectives are essential to creating a non-competitive process in which everyone can share questions, interests and concerns. Consider yourself a co-caretaker of seminar dynamics.

Some tips:

- *be mindful of everyone's well-being, and help each other be here as fully as possible. *This is at the heart of our work as seminar participants and as beings living in a challenging world.*
- *speak in the first person singular from your own experience (avoid using "we" statements such as "we grow up learning x" and instead try, "I grew up learning x").
- *Practice refraining from making assumptions, avoid generalizing about communities, increase awareness of your biases, and approach our sources and each other with openness.
- *Offer encouragement when others are sharing.

2. Documenting Queer History, 10%: This short paper invites you to focus on a section of the photo-documentary book, *We Are Everywhere*. May be done in groups of 2, 3, or 4. Details on p. 6 of this syllabus. **Hard copy due in class September 20.**

Engagement Log on *Stonewall Reader*, 3 total, 10% each: This structured Log invites you to select one author in each part of the *Stonewall Reader* and reflect on the ways their

experience of community as it relates to their participation in social action, art and community. Due Sept 26, Oct 17, Oct 31. Details on p. 6-7 of this syllabus.

Queer Art and Artists in the 20th Century presentation, 2 total, 20% each. This assignment gives you a chance to learn about an artist, genre of art, or community of your choice and important to the making of the queer 20th century, and present it (max 4 minutes) to the seminar to expand our collective awareness. **Presentation dates are by sign-up.** You may do this on your own or in groups of two. Details on p. 7 of this syllabus.

Art and Activism in the Queer 20th Century. Seminar Project, 10%. This will be a compendium of the movements, art, people, and communities we have together learned about and how they matter to us. It is YOUR collective project, to be determined together.

I encourage you to keep a journal in which you reflect on seminar, observations, questions, images. Write, doodle, draw, as much or little as you want, see what happens if you use your journal on a regular basis. Not required and I will never ask you to hand it in or share it.

We will be making mini-zines frequently in class!

Accepted Paper Formats: I encourage you to work by hand whenever possible, or whatever media makes completion of the assignment possible for you. For most assignments, I am open to styles and formats including poetry, drawing, interview, drama, comic, zine, etc. I encourage you to use a style, voice, or medium that best allows you to say what you need to say, helps you get the most out of the assignment or makes it most meaningful for your purposes, and/or that allows you to experiment with a medium you think is worth trying. If certain elements of the assignment are not possible within that format, you may include whatever is needed in an addendum or separate page. If you are unsure, please email me and we can discuss it.

Seminar Schedule:

September 12 Introductions The Queer 20th Century through Queer-Made Media
short videos: William Dorsey Swan

A Storme Life <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgCVNEiOwLs>

Marlon Riggs, "Snap!" (from *Tongues Untied*)

Sept. 19 We Are Everywhere

Read: *We Are Everywhere*: Acknowledgements, Foreword, Introduction, and Conclusion.

Documenting Queer History Assignment due in class

General Participation Prompts: what do you notice about the presentation of material?
Thinking about documentary as an art form, how did these things circulate and among whom?

Sept. 26 Archives, Communities, Stories, and Film

Read: *The Stonewall Reader*, Part One, Before Stonewall: Pages 3-95.

General prompt: What evidence do you see of art and activism, and how does that relate to the story being told here?

Engagement LOG Due.

We will watch *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria*.

Oct. 3 UW's history of discrimination: Housing, the Gay Purges, and more

Before our class meets: take a look at the Sifting and Winnowing online exhibit.

<https://publichistoryproject.wisc.edu/teaching-guides/> What stands out to you most?

Read: items linked in "The Gay Purge" unit found on exhibit website,

<https://publichistoryproject.wisc.edu/teaching-guides/>

Read: Imani Perry, *Looking for Lorraine*, Introduction and Chapter 2. (online via UW library) and check out this twitter thread:

<https://mobile.twitter.com/imaniperry/status/1212843547222786048>

Participation Prompt: What evidence do you see of community-building, or the arts of resistance, in these contexts of discrimination?

Scott Seyforth, LGBTQ+ Archivist, will visit class.

Oct. 10 Persistent Endeavor: Pauli Murray and the Queer Twentieth Century

Read: Rosenberg, *Jane Crow*. Author's Note on Pronouns, and Introduction.

Read: Pauli Murray, "The Little Man from Mars" (both readings provided)

We will watch in class *My Name Is Pauli Murray*

Oct. 17 Community-Building and Transformative Justice

Read: *The Stonewall Reader*, Part II

Engagement LOG Due: select one entry. What do you see of art, activism and community and how does that relate to the story being told here?

We will watch in class *Major!*

Oct 24 Community-Building and Justice Education

Read: Kai Pyle, "Naming and Claiming" (provided electronically)

We will watch in class *Two Spirits* documentary

[Possible LGBTQ+ ARCHIVE VISIT, might rearrange schedule]

Oct 31 After Stonewall

Read: The Stonewall Reader, Part III

Engagement LOG Due

Nov. 7 Queer Views on the Mainstream

Read: Middlebrook, *Suits Me: The Double Life of Billy Tipton* Author's Note to page 11, available on reserve and online at

https://www.google.com/books/edition/Suits_Me/f_Gav_BdQFQC?hl=en&gbpv=0

We will watch in class, *No Ordinary Man*

Nov. 14 Research Week, seminar does not meet.

Nov. 21 Queer Views on the Mainstream

We will watch in class, *Disclosure*

Nov. 28 From Underground Comics to Educational Film

Read: Rupert Kinnard, *BB and the Diva*

Read: Alison Bechdel, *The Essential Dykes to Watch Out For*

We will watch together in class, *No Straight Lines*

Dec. 5 Working on Seminar Project

Dec. 12 LAST CLASS

Details on Grades and Expectations:

If you have any concerns about your ability to meet the requirements of the course, please contact me sooner rather than later to give you the best possible chance of success according to your goals for the course.

All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade.

Late assignments: I will accept late papers and assignments provided you let me know as soon as you can and give me an anticipated submission date. One late paper or assignment will not be marked down; beyond one, late papers/assignments may lose 10 points a week.

Completion of Course: All work must be submitted no later than midnight, December 18. Please contact me as soon as you are able if you anticipate you will not be able to complete course material by this date.

Incomplete grade for course: If life circumstances prevent you from completing the course during the semester, you may take an incomplete provided you let me know as soon as you can and we can discuss the options for completion.

Grade Scale:

93-100= A

88-92=AB

83-87=B

78-82=BC

72-77=C

65-71=D

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

Documenting Queer History, 10%: This short paper or zine invites you to focus on a section of the photo-documentary book, *We Are Everywhere*. First, read the Acknowledgements, Foreword, Introduction, and Conclusion. Then, select one Part (time period, as divided in *We Are Everywhere*) that you will focus on.

A.) Choose an image, event, or portion in that Part that you find particularly interesting and share a bit about what you notice in that.

B) Thinking about documentation itself, what do you find interesting about the Part as a whole? Create one page in response to A and B, in your own voice and style, using any combination of words and/or images, to discuss the significance of what you are focusing on and why it catches your interest.

May be done in groups of 2, 3, or 4; each member must contribute their perspective and sign your name on that portion. Adjust paper length accordingly, adding roughly ½ page per person.

Hard copy due in class September 20.

ENGAGEMENT LOGS: Use the log template provided below to engage *The Stonewall Reader* sections. Within each section of the Stonewall Reader, choose one entry that especially interests you; you will focus your Log response on this. Logs should be brought to class in hard copy, due as noted in schedule. May use both sides of paper. For multiple sheets, please staple or paper clip.

Template

Pages are divided into sections. **Sections** may be of any size or shape. You may do them in any order. Trust your intuition; skip something if you need to; there is no wrong way to do this. I encourage you to **write by hand** if you can and/or make other kinds of marks as inspired.

Page One: divide into 4 spaces. **Must include your name and date, and the entry you are focusing on.**

Space One: What you find most interesting or stands out to you about the assigned Part (1, 2, or 3) *as a whole*.

Space Two: For you, the most powerful passage, image, or moment in your *chosen* entry.

Space Three: Something in this entry that surprised you.

Space Four: Something in this entry or in the Part that you could relate to.

Page Two: In 2 areas.

Area One: regarding the entry you chose: what things (in past or present, in larger social scale or more personal) seem most significant, as you read it, in shaping this author's or interviewee's sense of themselves in the world, their sense of direction or possibility?

Area Two: A scene that you imagine based on the writing in your selected entry words: imagine it, and sketch it in this space. Sketch may be very simplified or rough—and if this makes you nervous, do it with your non-dominant hand or with your eyes closed so you don't worry too much about how it comes out; often setting a 2-minute (max) timer can help, too. The point is to get the energy of it in your bodymind.

Page Three: in 2 spaces.

Space One: What aspects of this entry provide useful or intriguing models for you as you think about challenges you face in your life, or models for art and communication?

Space Two: Sketch an image, line, scene or write a super short vignette (in 20-100 words) from your own life or your sense of the present moment. Anything.

Queer Art, Artists and Activism in the 20th Century presentation, 2 total, 20% each. This assignment gives you a chance to learn something you want to know more about an artist, genre of art, and/or art in activism important to the making of the queer 20th century, and present it to the seminar to expand our collective awareness. You may share very brief visual or audio media or brief film clips of the artists or a moment of activism. You may not simply play a video in lieu of making your own presentation. **Presentations are by sign-up.** **You may do this on your own or in groups of two.**

Conduct some research to discover your focus and learn more about it. Your **presentation** should be **no more than 4 minutes** and include the context of the art/artist/activism: when and where was this? if there are actors/artists involved, who were they and provide a short biography relevant to your focus. What was influential or motivating, in a personal sense and in a broader social sense? What kinds of impacts did this art/activism have at the time, and is there an ongoing legacy?

Hand in your notes and full list of citations (the sources you used, authors, publications, dates, page numbers, etc) on the day of your presentation.

A Note on Language

Identity: The words people use to describe themselves may mean different things for different people. This goes for terms such as trans, nonbinary, cis, male, female, and it also includes people's names and pronouns. I take it as a fundamental principle that the ways every person names and identifies themselves will be accepted and honored.

We necessarily create new language to express nuances and experiences that may be erased in existing vocabularies. Be aware that: **a) words and terms change meaning over time and may mean different things within different communities;**

b) there is no universal agreement on what terms are best or most accurate;

c) be aware that terms have the power to offend or harm some people, try to understand why that is so, and learn the languages that are more appropriate;

d) when we use different vocabularies, it is important to understand where those terms are coming from, how they affect others, and possible reasons for and against using them.

e) this class is an opportunity to learn, and **we are all learning**, no matter what our prior experience may be.

Acronyms: Acronyms abbreviate and collapse infinite diversity and complexity into letters standing for words that obscure variation within.

BIPOC refers to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Trans* is often used as a shorthand to include varieties of ways that people do not conform to binary, dimorphic constructions of male and female expressed in social and/or physiological ways. This can include but goes beyond terms trans, transgender, transsexual, nonbinary (nb), agender, gender expansive, gender queer, and etc. each with its own valences.

2S refers to Two Spirit, a term indigenous peoples on this continent have selected to represent the many expressions and forms of sex/gender/sexual diversities among indigenous peoples. It does not translate to "gay" or "trans" or "nonbinary" and can be understood only in the context of each culture's meaning-making systems around sex/gender/sexuality.

I refers to Intersex, a term that encompasses 30-40 variations in sex/gender development.

A refers to Asexual, or Ace, also collapsing many ways of being into a single term.

CREDIT HOUR definition:

A single credit hour is defined by the university as one hour (i.e. 50 minutes) of classroom or direct instruction/discussion and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week over approximately 14 weeks. The credit standard for this course is met by a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), reading, writing, and projects as described in the syllabus.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution and your education. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, having another person or machine or software produce your assignments, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of misconduct that result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.